

In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:
 - a holding portion holding obtained image data;
 - an image-related information producing portion producing image-related information related to the image data, the image-related information including a thumbnail image corresponding to the image data;
 - an operation portion accepting a user input designating an external device as a sending destination of the image-related information corresponding to the image data held in the holding portion;
 - a sending portion automatically sending the image-related information corresponding to the image data held in the holding portion to an external device at the designated destination in response to the user input on the operation portion;
 - a receiving portion receiving output form instruction information from the external device, the output form instruction information including an instruction relating to an output form of the image data, and determined by the user based on the image-related information; and
 - an image forming portion forming image data for output from the image data held by the holding portion based on the received output form instruction information.
2. (Cancelled).
3. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the receiving portion receives, as an output form, the output form instruction information instructing either print output of the image data or sending output of the image data to another device.
4. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the image data is obtained by scanning each of documents forming a document group,

the image-related information producing portion produces the image-related information for each of the documents, and

the receiving portion receives the output form instruction information instructing an output form of each of the documents.

5. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:

a holding portion holding obtained image data;

a thumbnail image producing portion producing a first thumbnail image corresponding to the image data held in the holding portion;

an operation portion accepting a user input designating an external device as a sending destination of the first thumbnail image;

a sending portion automatically sending the produced first thumbnail image to the designated external device in response to the user input on the operation portion; and

a receiving portion receiving a setting from the external device, the setting being related to a thumbnail image, wherein

when the receiving portion receives the setting, the thumbnail image producing portion produces a second thumbnail image corresponding to the image data based on the received setting; and

the sending portion sends the produced second thumbnail image to the designated external device.

6. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein

the receiving portion receives the setting designating at least one of a resolution of the thumbnail image, a color of the abbreviated thumbnail image, a data format of the thumbnail image and a region of the image data to be used for producing the thumbnail image.

7. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the setting received by the receiving portion from the external device designates at least one of change of the thumbnail image and resending of the thumbnail image.

8. (Currently Amended) An image forming method comprising:
a storing step of storing obtained image data in a storage device by an image forming apparatus;

an image-related information producing step of producing image-related information related to the image data in the image forming apparatus, the image-related information including a thumbnail image corresponding to the image data;

an accepting step of accepting a user input via an operation portion of the image forming apparatus, the user input designating an image managing apparatus as a sending destination of the image-related information corresponding to the image data held in the holding portion;

an image-related information sending step of automatically sending the image-related information corresponding to the image data held in the holding portion to the designated image managing apparatus from the image forming apparatus in response to the user input on the operation portion;

an image-related information displaying step of displaying, in the image managing apparatus, the image-related information received from the image forming apparatus;

an output form instruction information producing step of producing, in the image managing apparatus, output form instruction information, the output form instruction information including an instruction relating to an output form of the image data, determined by the user based on the image-related information;

an output form instruction information sending step of sending the produced output form instruction information from the image managing apparatus to the image forming apparatus; and

an image forming step of forming image data for output from the image data stored in the storage device based on the output form instruction information received from the image managing apparatus.

9. (Currently Amended) An image forming method comprising:

a storing step of storing obtained image data in a storage device in[[by]] an image forming apparatus;

an accepting step of accepting a user input via an operation portion of the image forming apparatus, the user input designating an image managing apparatus as a sending destination of a thumbnail image to be produced from the image data stored on the image forming apparatus;

a setting step of effecting a setting related to the thumbnail image to be produced by the image managing apparatus;

a transmitting step of transmitting the setting from the image managing apparatus to the image forming apparatus;

a thumbnail image producing step of producing, in the image forming apparatus, the thumbnail image corresponding to the image data based on the transmitted setting; and

a sending step of automatically sending the thumbnail image from the image forming apparatus to the image managing apparatus in response to the user input.

10. (Currently Amended) An image forming method comprising:

a storing step of storing obtained image data in a storage device in[[by]] an image forming apparatus;

an accepting step of accepting a user input via an operation portion of the image forming apparatus, the user input designating an image managing apparatus as a sending destination of a thumbnail to be produced corresponding to the image data stored on the image forming apparatus;

a first thumbnail image producing and sending step of producing a first thumbnail image corresponding to the image data, and sending the first thumbnail image from the image forming apparatus to the image managing apparatus in response to the user input on the operation portion;

an instructing step of sending an instruction related to the first thumbnail image from the image managing apparatus to the image forming apparatus; and

a second thumbnail image producing and sending step of producing, in the image forming apparatus, a second thumbnail image to be substituted for the first thumbnail image corresponding to the image data based on the instruction, and sending the second thumbnail image.

11. (Currently Amended) An image managing apparatus comprising:

a receiving portion receiving image-related information related to image data stored on from an image forming apparatus, the image-related information including a thumbnail image corresponding to the image data;

a display portion displaying the image-related information;

an output form instruction information producing portion producing output form instruction information including an instruction relating to an output form of the image data held in the image forming apparatus, the output form determined by a user based on the received image-related information; and

a sending portion sending the output form instruction information to the image forming apparatus.

12. (Previously Presented) The image managing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the image managing apparatus further comprises an accepting portion accepting an instruction operation using the thumbnail image and performed by a user for an output form.

13. (Previously Presented) The image managing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the output form instruction information producing portion produces, as the output form, the output form instruction information instructing either print output of the image data or sending output of the image data to another device.

14. (Previously Presented) The image managing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the image data is obtained by scanning each of documents forming a document group, the image-related information received from the image forming apparatus includes the image-related information for each of the documents, and

the output form instruction information producing portion produces the output form instruction information instructing an output form of each of the documents.

15. (Currently Amended) An image managing apparatus comprising:
a receiving portion receiving a first thumbnail image corresponding to image data from an image forming apparatus, the image data held in the image forming apparatus; and

a sending portion sending instruction information providing an instruction related to reproduction of a thumbnail image concerning the first thumbnail image to the image forming apparatus, wherein

the receiving portion receiving a second thumbnail image reproduced at the image forming apparatus in compliance with the instruction information sent from the image managing apparatus to the image forming apparatus;

the sending portion sending output form instruction information including an instruction relating to an output from the image data held in the image forming apparatus and determined by a user.

16. (Currently Amended) The image managing apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the instruction related to the abbreviated thumbnail image instructs at least one of change of the abbreviated thumbnail image and resending of the abbreviated thumbnail image.

17. (Previously Presented) The image managing apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the instruction related to the thumbnail image instructs at least one of a resolution of the thumbnail image, a color of the thumbnail image, a data format of the thumbnail image and a region of the image data to be used for producing the thumbnail image.

18. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the image-related information comprises color information of the image data.

19. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the operation portion comprises a user interface provided on the image forming apparatus that accepts the user input designating the external device.

20. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the image data is obtained by scanning.

21. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the image data is obtained by scanning.

22. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the image data is obtained by scanning.

23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein the image data is obtained by scanning.

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, wherein the image data is obtained by scanning.